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**MEMORANDUM**

From:  Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction

To: Nevada Educators and Stakeholders

Subject: Common Core State Standards Implementation Update

It is my pleasure to share with you some exciting information that will help guide and accelerate Nevada's K-12 education system into the future. On June 2, 2010, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers released a set of state-led education standards, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The English-language arts and mathematics standards for grades K-12 were developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including content experts, teachers, school administrators and parents. The CCSS and related information can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org>. After review and approval by the Council for Academic Standards, the Nevada State Board of Education met on June 18, 2010, to adopt the draft Common Core State Standards.

On June 15, 2010, educators from the Nevada Department of Education, Nevada School Districts, and Regional Professional Development Programs met to begin discussions concerning the roll-out of the Common Core Standards. As a result of these discussions, the Nevada Common Core Roll-Out Coalition was formed to include statewide representation with the primary goal being that all Nevada educators, parents, students, legislators, and stakeholders understand the significance of the adoption of the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics as the foundation of curriculum, instruction, and assessments. To aid in the roll-out through the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, Nevada became a member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Additional information about the consortium can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER>.

Until assessments aligned to the CCSS are fully implemented during the 2014-2015 school year, as proposed by SBAC, Nevada's existing assessment system of Criterion Referenced Tests, Writing, High School Proficiency Exams and Nevada Alternate Assessment will remain in place. Curriculum and instruction aligned to the CCSS must be carefully balanced with existing Nevada standards to ensure that all students are adequately prepared to participate in the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program (NPEP) while moving forward with the more rigorous CCSS.

Fall 2010	The Bridge Document will be completed and distributed to Nevada Educators and stakeholder to view the similarities and differences of the currently-used Nevada Academic Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards.
Spring 2011	Tools will be developed to facilitate the transition of curriculum and instruction from the Nevada Standard to the Common Core State Standards.  All Nevada Educators will receive basic professional development tools and resources to aide in the transition process of instruct and monitoring of student achievement in <b>both</b> the Nevada Standards <b>and</b> Common Core Standards.
2011-2014 School Years	Nevada's existing assessment system, based on present Nevada Standards, of Criterion Referenced Tests, Writing, High School Proficiency Exams and Nevada Alternate Assessment will remain in place.
2013-2014 School Year	Common Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards will be field-tested across the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium member states, if funded.
2014-2015 School Year	The SBAC Common Assessments will be operational and included in Nevada's system of accountability.

To ensure that this ambitious plan is successful, timely, and relevant; communication is essential for all Nevada Stakeholders. To accomplish this, the Nevada Department of Education will designate a location on the NDE web site that will contain links and documents containing all pertinent information. Prior to the posting of new information on the web site, I will be sending out a memo that explains what is being posted, its relevance, impact and expectations for Nevada Educators and stakeholders.

The Nevada State Board of Education, The Nevada Department of Education, and the 17 school districts believe that the adoption of the Common Core State Standards will significantly enhance the educational system of Nevada. Implementation of the CCSS will allow all students to be instructed to a common set of standards adhering to common expectations and goals within Nevada, as well as across state lines. Through collaborative efforts teachers, administrators and professional development providers will gain information and share ideas regarding instructional best practice and effective teaching. Working with other states within the SBAC will also allow Nevada the opportunity to gain and share expertise through the development of common formative and summative assessment tools and materials. These collaborative efforts will result in ensuring that Nevada's students will complete high school prepared for success in college and careers.